THE RIGHT VNDERSTANDING OF THE TIMES: OPENED

In a Sermon preached to the Honorable Houſe of Commons, *December* 30. 1646. at *Margaret Weſtminſter*, Being the day of their ſolemne Monethly Faſt.

By *Stephen Marſhall*, *B. D.* Miniſter of Gods Word at *Finchingfield* in *Eſſex*.

Jer. 8. Verſ. 7,8.

The Storke in the heavens knoweth her appointed times, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow obſerve the time of their comming, but my people know not the judgement of the Lord: How do yee ſay, wee are wiſe?

If thou hadſt knowne, even thou at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. Luk. 19.42.

So teach us to number our dayes, that wee may apply our hearts unto wiſedome, Pſal. 90. 12.

LONDON,
Printed by *Richard Cotes*, for *Stephen Bowtell*, and are to bee ſold at the ſigne of the Bible in Popes-head Alley, 1647.

THE RIGHT VNDERSTANDING OF THE TIMES:

OPENED

In a Sermon preached to the Honorable House of Commons, December 30. 1645. at Margaret Westminster, Being the day of their solemne Monthly Fast.

By Stephen Marshall, B. D. Minister of Gods Word at Finchingfield in Essex.

Jer. 8. Vers. 7, 8.

The Stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the time of their comming, but my people know not the judgement of the Lord: How do ye say, wee are wise?

If thou hadst knowne even thou at least in thirthy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. Luk. 19. 42.

So teach us to number our dayes, that wee may apply our hearts unto wisedom, Psal. 90. 12.

LONDON,

Printed by Richard Cotes, for Stephen Bowtell, and are to bee sold at the signe of the Bible in Popes-head Alley, 1647.

TO THE
HONORABLE
The House of
COMMONS
Now Assembled in
PARLIAMENT.

IT hath been much lamented by learned men, that the times wherein things have been done in the world, are no more truly computed, and that thereby all Histories of times are very imperfect, Apud quos ratio temporis non cohæret, apud illos neque veritatis neque fidei historicæ ratio ulla constare potest; *How much more is it to bee lamented, that so few have any understanding of the times in reference to the things which concerne their everlasting*

everlaſting peace? becauſe no leſſe miſchiefe then ruine of ſoules, of Nations and Churches unavoidably breake in upon them, who know not the time of their viſitation; If this plaine Sermon may help this way to mend the times, and promote the right and beſt ſtudy of them, eſpecially if God vouchſafe to bleſſe it to bee in any degree uſefull to you in your great worke, for whoſe Meridian it was calculated, for whoſe uſe it was compoſed, to whom it was preached, and by whoſe order it is now made publique, it will bee a great comfort to the ſpirit, and a bleſſed anſwer from heaven to the Prayers of

Your unworthy and moſt devoted Servant,

STEPH. MARSHALL.

A SERMON PREACHED

Before the Honorable Houſe of Commons, at their Monethly Faſt, *Decemb.* 30. 1646.

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1 Chron. 12. 32.

And of the Children of Iſſachar, which were men that had underſtanding of the times, to know what Iſrael ought to doe; the heads of them were two hundred, and all their brethren were at their command.

THis whole Chapter (Beloved) doth containe a Liſt or Catalogue of all the men of warre which did cleave to *David*, their *names*, their *qualities*, their *Number*; and there is a double Catalogue of them: Firſt, a Catalogue of them that did cleave to him, before *Saul* was dead, while he was in a defenſive warre for his owne ſafetie; for although *David* for a great while, had not above ſix or ſeven hundred

Introduction ſhewing the ſcope of the Chapter.

with him, yet in the end they fell to him, especially out of the Tribes of *Judah, Benjamin, Gad*, and *Manasseh*, so many that his Army *grew to be like an Army of God.* And
Verse 22. lest any man should thinke that it were no better then rebellion in him and them to beare defensive Armes against his Prince, it is said in the 18 Verse, *That the Spirit came upon one of the chiefe Commanders*, and told him they were his, and would live and die with him, and that God was with him, they knew him innocent; they saw he was unjustly persecuted, they came to rescue him as a Partridge out of a Falcons Talons, and in so doing they did no more, then the whole hoste did at another time, when they saved *Jonathan* out of the hands of his father *Saul*,
1 Sam. 14. 45. who would unjustly have put him to death. The other part of the Chapter beginning at Verse 23. containeth the Catalogue of the Commanders and Souldiers that fell in to him to make him King, after the death of *Saul*, and there you shall finde that the excellent qualities of all the Leaders, and of many of the Souldiers are described; some of them were excellent Archers, some were exact Slingers who could throw and hit at a haires breadth, some of them were as couragious as Lions, some of them were as swift as the Roes upon the Mountaines, but none of them all came neere the Tribe of *Issachar*, in that which makes a people strong and happy both in the time of warre and peace; *They were men of understanding, who knew the times what Israel had to doe*; and of this excellent commendation of this Tribe of *Issachar*, as of a Theame that very much concernes us, I have chosen to treate this day before this great Assembly by the assistance of Almighty God; wherein there are three things to bee handled. First,

The Text opened and divided, I.

The persons spoken of, *the Tribe of Issachar*, and their heads and leaders especially. Secondly,

Their

Their singular commendations, they had understanding to know the times, what Israel had to doe; the whole Tribe, but especially their Leaders, who were about two hundred, knew the times in reference to their duty. Thirdly, Here is the interest which these Leaders had in the hearts of their Brethren, and this procured principally by their wisedome and understanding; *all their Brethren were at their command*, or as the word signifies, *depended on their mouth*. I begin briefly to speake of the first. 2. 3.

The persons, they were the men of *Issachar*; *Issachar* you know was one of the twelve Tribes, one of *Iacobs* sonnes by *Leah*, and their lot in the land of *Canaan* fell betwixt the halfe Tribe of *Manasseh* and *Zebulun*, and their province was bounded by the mountaines of *Gilboa* on the one side, and mount *Hermon* on the other; all that goodly part of the Countrey, that was called the fat valley of *Jezreel*, was the inheritance of this Tribe of *Issachar*, a rich in-land Country, and formerly their Spirits and Genius was like to that of Country Farmers. They minded nothing but their back and their belly, and so *Jacob* himselfe did foretell of them, in the 49. of *Genesis*, when he said, that *Issachar was like a strong Asse that couched downe betweene two burthens, and saw that rest was good, and gave himselfe willingly to beare Tribute*: The meaning was, that this Tribe would bee like unto that dull, simple, slothfull creature the Asse, that minded nothing but his belley, give him but meate enough for his belly and lay what you will upon his back; so this Tribe, if they might not be outed or plundred in their rich Country, but might follow their businesse, and gather wealth, lay any thing upon them they would beare it: this of old was the Genius of this Tribe, but *now* another manner of Spirit possessed them; none of all the Maritime townes nor Cities where the people are most active, and fit for Negotiation, went beyond,

1 Part, what the Tribe of *Issachar* was.

What their temper and spirit in time past.

Gen. 49. 14, 15 opened and explained.

What at this present.

or came neere to the Tribe of *Issachar*; now (I say) they had learned that that makes a people happy, they had wisedome and unitie, they had understanding to know the times and their dutie, they had many thousands of eyes to see into the true state of affaires, and then they had as many thousand hands ready to execute; they could presently fall upon that which belonged to them; *they had understanding of the times, and knew* not onely what themselves, but what all the Country, what all *Israel had to doe*; this was the people, and this strange alteration that God had made in the Spirit of this Tribe of *Issachar*, doth afford us this excellent lesson.

Doct. 1. God oft raiseth up the spirits of people to doe worthily from whom men would little expect it.

That the Lord can at his pleasure inable and raise up the spirits of persons, and people to doe worthily, from whom no body would expect any thing. *Moses* had foretold that *Issachar* would bee but a dull Asse, but you see how the Lord had altered, and raised him up to doe excellently; hee went beyond all the other Tribes; and God hath often done so, hee takes *Moses* a Shepheard, a man slow of speech, sends him and makes him a fit man to deliver a whole nation out of bondage and captivitie; at another time, hee raises *Gideon*, a private Gentleman, it may bee but a Yeomans sonne, from his Flayle when hee was threshing of Wheat, and makes him a Captaine to route the whole Army of the Midianites and to judge his people; at another time takes *Saul*, a Private Gentlemans sonne, who was seeking for his fathers Asses, and makes him fit to governe a kingdome; takes *David* a young youth from following his Ewes great with Lambe, and presently enables him to cope with the Gyant *Goliah*, and to destroy him, and afterwards to bee the ruler over Gods people; hee takes *Amos* from being a Neatheard, and a gatherer of Summer fruit, to bee a Prophet, and to preach in the Kings Chappell; takes Fishermen who were never bred in Uni-

Gen. 4.
Iudges 6.
1 Sam 9.
1 Sam. 16.

Amos 7. 14.

 versities

verſities, and ſends them into all the world with the power of the Goſpel to ſubdue the Nations to Jeſus Chriſt. Thus the Lord hath raiſed up inſtruments, and hee can eaſily doe it, for there is a ſpirit in man, but the inſpiration which gives underſtanding and gifts comes onely from the Almighty; the Lord hath abundance of the Spirit, and powres it out where, and how, and in what manner hee pleaſeth.

Reaſons of it. He hath abundance of the Spirit.

Application.

This may bee a great incouragement to us in all our extremities and exigents, let us doe our dutie, and let us never feare Gods wanting of inſtruments for his worke, when wee are low, wee preſently cry out, Lord *by whom ſhall Jacob ariſe*, by whom? by ſtones raiſed up to bee children, and by children inabled to doe the worke of men? Wee ſhould never bee at our faiths end, though ſometimes wee are at our wits end, let us doe our dutie, and leave it to God, who can eaſily raiſe up inſtruments to do his worke, from whom wee would never expect it; wee our ſelves have had a great deale of bleſſed experience of it. In the beginning of our publique troubles, our queſtion was, by whom ſhall *England* ariſe now it is thus low? Wee demanded, where ſhall wee finde Captaines and Commanders for a warre in a Nation where all men have been bred in eaſe and peace? God hath found them, and tooke Gentlemen from following their Hawkes and Dogs, and Tradeſmen from their ſhops, and Husbandmen from their Ploughes, to bee able to cope with the moſt expert Commanders in the world: and now wee are at another loſſe, now wee are demanding, where ſhall we find Miniſters for eight or ten thouſand Congregations, to inſtruct them in the way of life? Feare not, if God for our ſinnes deny us not this mercy, hee can fulfill that in the 68. Pſalme; *The Lord will give the Word, and great ſhall be the multitude of them that ſhall publiſh it*, the Lord can raiſe them

Pſal. 68. 11.

them up unexpectedly; and so in all other our difficulties.

The second and chiefe thing in the Text. Their singular commendation.

But this I purposely onely point at, that I might not bee straightned in the second, which is the singular commendations of this Tribe, *They were men of understanding to know the times, and what Israel had to doe.*

Doct. 2. It is a singular commendation to know the times in reference to mens duties. This Doctrine, first, explained.

That it is a great and high commendation of any people, especially of their Heads and Leaders, to know the times in reference to their dutie: These men of *Issachar* had understanding of the times, to know what *Israel* had to doe; this God sets downe as their high commendation; in the handling of it I shall indeavour these three things. First,

I shall interpret the meaning of it, make you see what it is to know the times in reference to duties. Secondly,

2ly, proved.

I shall indeavour to prove it out of the Scripture, and illustrate the truth of it, that you may see, that it is a high commendation, and a matter of extreme consequence; and thirdly, and principally,

3ly, applyed.

I shall indeavour to make Application of it for our own good. For the first,

First explained, there is a fivefold knowledge of the times.

What it is to know the times in reference to dutie; you may please to observe that in the Scripture, and in the practise of men, there is found a fivefold knowledge of the times.

1 Astrologicall.

There is an *Astrologicall* knowledge of the times, such a knowledge as the Starre-gazers do boast of; a knowledg whereby a company of vaine men doe undertake out of the bookes of the Starres to tell you whatsoever God hath decreed concerning Men or States: this knowledg is so condemned in other places of Scripture that none of you will imagine, that this was the commendation of this Tribe. Secondly,

2 Diabolicall.

There is another knowledge of the times, which I may call a *Diabolicall* knowledge of the times, whereby wicked and ungodly men do studie to improve all advan-

tages

tages of time to further their own lusts and wickednesses; the study and knowledge of time-servers, who indeavour to make the times further them in their cursed designes; men who like Willowes or Bulrushes in the water will bow which way soever the streame runs, and dance after the present Fiddle of the times for their owne ends. I am certaine none of you think that this was the commendation of this Tribe; such Temporizers & Time-servers, however they may for a while applaud their own wisedomes, will one day know, they have served but an ill Master; this was farre from the Tribe of *Issachar*. Thirdly,

3 Prophetical.

You shall read of a *Prophetical* knowledge of the times, that is, such a knowledge as wherein the Lord by revelation doth inable some of his servants, I meane the Prophets, to know what shall afterwards come to passe; and this kinde of knowledge, though every man hath an itch after it, and many doe as *Nebuchadnezzar* did, when his thoughts troubled him in the night, that hee might know what should come to passe afterwards; yet our Lord hath told us, *That it is not for us thus to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath kept in his owne hand*; there is fourthly,

Dan. 2 29.

Act. 1.7.

4 Historicall and Astronomicall

Another knowledge of the Times, and study of it, which is, an *Historicall* knowledge of the times, or an *Astronomicall* knowledge of the times; a knowledge which is extremely and deservedly cried up by learned men; a knowledge wherein many men of choycest wits, both among Heathens and Christians, have tooke very great paines, wherein they have much advanced wisedome and learning, especially in our latter age. Many rare men of choycest abilities have set downe in a continued Series, a Chronologie of all the yeers, that have been since the Creation, and of the most memorable things and persons that have fallen out, or lived in the severall ages, and yeeres;

yeeres; and this they have done to their owne everlasting honour, rectifying the accompt of time, and extremely advantaged even the ſtudie of the Scriptures; now this knowledge, though it bee excellent, yet my Text hath nothing to doe with it, and truly though it bee an excellent thing, men may have it, and yet die tooles, and be miſerable for want of that knowledge which I am this day to ſpeake of. The Nation of the Jewes were admirable in that kind of accompt of times: *Scaliger* ſaith of them, they were exact even to admiration; and *Sethus Calviſius* one of the moſt learned writers of that kind, though hee goe another way to worke, yet confeſſes that in the Jewes accompt, they did not loſe above the accompt of one houre in the ſpace of 1500. yeers; yet becauſe they had no better knowledge of the times then that, the Lord in the eighth of *Jeremiah* ſaith, they were fooles, and had not ſo much wiſedome, as the Crane and the Storke, and the Swallow, thoſe irrationall Animals, who had ſo much ſagacitie, as to know the times of their comming into a Countrey, and leaving a Countrey; but this people knew nothing of the times in reference to Gods judgements, and their owne duties: the Lord counted them fooles for all their other learning; And therefore there is, fiftly,

Ier. 8.

5 Theologicall, a gracious and practicall knowledge, which is here meant.

Another knowledge of the times, which I may call a Theologicall knowledge, or rather a gratious and a practicall knowledge of the times, which is, ſo to know the times, as to underſtand the moment and exigence of all affaires which fall within the times in reference to their owne dutie, that they may improve all occurrences which fall out to the right end. This is the knowledge that I am to ſpeake of, and this knowledge infinitely goes beyond that other; I confeſſe I finde a great many learned Volumes writ for the helpe of the other, to further the Chro-

Chronologicall, or Historicall wisedome of the times, abundance of Astronomicall Tables have been compiled, and other helpes set forth; but for this latter, I hardly know one little Pamphlet extant about it, and yet this infinitely goes beyond the other; for though a man should die ignorant of the other, and never know the *Julian* Account, or wherein the new & old stile differ one from another, if hee have but learned to number his dayes, so as to apply his heart to wisedome, hee will honour God here, and bee happy for ever; but without this, what learning soever hee had in the other, his life will be wicked, and in the end hee will die a foole: And this was the knowledge of this Tribe, this Practicall knowledge, so that when the other Tribes some of them stood for the house of *Saul*, to continue the government there, others of them inclined to *David* to make him King, and others probably were unsatisfied in their thoughts concerning either of them, possibly thinking it would bee best to continue their old Aristocraticall government, in their severall Tribes, and to ~~waite~~ that God should raise them up extraordinary Judges in difficult times, and so they stood in a kind of indifferency and neutralitie; these men of *Issachar*, especially their Leaders, had so studied the times, that they did not onely know what was lawfull and expedient in this huge turne of theirs, in this great businesse that was before them, but they knew what was their dutie, yea what all the kingdome, all the Common-wealth ought to doe with them, they knew the times, and what *Israel had to doe.*

What this practicall knowledge of the times is.

Now this knowledge that I have brought you to, is not a mentall or speculative understanding of humane affaires, or things belonging either to Church or Common-wealth, but it is a Practicall knowledge, which is a wise abilitie to manage all the understanding that they

have in reference to their dutie; in one word, it is to observe all Gods administrations, wherewith the present time is filled, his providences, his mercies, his judgements, his words, his workes, to observe them (I say) so as thereby to bee inabled seasonably and timely to performe their owne duties, and to regulate their conversations according to the exigence and juncture of times, for the glory of God, the good of their brethren, and the salvation of their owne soules, and this is the Theame wherein I now proceed.

2. This Doctrine proved.

To give you some evidence out of the Scripture, to make it apparent to you, that it is the highest commendations that can bee given o any people, to have this understanding of the times, in reference to their dutie: and for the proofe of it, I shall indeavour these two things. First,

1. To shew it you plainely out of the Scriptures, that it is a marvailous high commendation, and a deserved one. And secondly,

2. I shall indeavour to make a further illustration of this Doctrine, of knowing the times, out of Gods Word.

1. The Scripture calls this wisedome.

To prove that it is such a high and deserved commendations, take but these three proofes. First, every where in the Scripture this is counted true wisedome, and in the accompt of God, they goe for wise men, who understand the times in reference to their duties; looke first into the fift of the *Ephesians*, at the eight verse, and so forward, the Apostle layes downe this great Doctrine, That now God had sent the light of the Gospell amongst them, they must not for time to come walke as other Gentiles did walke in the vanitie of their minds, but they must leade a life worthy of the Gospell; and this hee proves by many Arguments, which when hee hath proved, then in the 15. and 16. verses, hee sets downe what this life is, *see then*, that you walke ἀκριβῶς, *exactly*, *not as*

Eph. 5. 15, 16. opened and explained.

Fooles

Fooles but as Wiſe men; wherein lies that? *redeeming the time, becauſe the dayes are evill*; there is all required, there is the manifeſtation and demonſtration, that you do not walke like Fooles, but as Wiſe men, if you have but once learned to redeeme the time in theſe evill dayes; the dayes are naught, the times are evill, full of ſnares to be avoyded, many duties to bee done; now herein will appeare Goſpell-wiſedome, to walke ſo as that in theſe evill dayes, you may redeeme the time: and *Solomon* hath an excellent diſcourſe of the ſame ſubject, in the eighth of *Eccleſiaſtes*, in the beginning of the Chapter, hee gives a high Encomium of a wiſe man; *Who is* (ſaith hee) *as the wiſe man?* that is, no man can bee compared to a wiſe man, what is hee? *one that knowes the interpretation of a thing*, hee that knowes what every buſineſſe doth truly ſignifie and call for, that is the wiſe man; then hee tells you, this mans wiſedome will gaine him courage and credit, hee will bee honored and eſteemed; then brings it downe, to manifeſt the excellency of this wiſedome in one particular caſe, which is the moſt tickle buſineſſe in the world for men to bee imployed in, and that is in attending upon the affaires of ſupreme Governors in doing that which the higher powers command them, for they will quickly bee angry and take offence, therefore doe their buſineſſe carefully and ſpeedily as you ſhould, and if they bee angry, goe not away in a pet, &c. But now leſt ſome body ſhould ſay, Doe you meane that a man ſhould doe all that Kings, and ſupreme Magiſtrates doe command, without further enquiry or delay? No, ſaith *Salomon* in the fifth Verſe, *the wiſe man knowes both time and judgement*; the wiſe man that hath the interpretation of a thing, knowes what is to bee done, what is to bee refuſed, and when things are to bee done moſt fitly or opportunely; therefore none like the wiſe man. So likewiſe

Eccleſ. 8. 1. to 6. opened.

Deut.32.19. wiſe *Moſes* in the 32. of *Deuteronomy*, about the 19. Verſe, *O that this people were wiſe, that they did but underſtand their laſt end*; that they but rightly knew their time: and in the Pſal.90.12. 90. Pſalme, which is another prayer of *Moſes*, *Lord teach us ſo to number our dayes*, to make ſuch a compute of our times, *that wee might apply our hearts to wiſedome*. I might give you many other Scriptures which ſhow that the Lord counts this to be true wiſedome; nay, I'le add this further, the very light of nature hath taught the Heathens to judge this to bee true wiſedome: the ſeven Counſellors of that great Emperour of *Perſia*, in the firſt of *Eſter* are ſaid to bee *men that knew the times*, the meaning is, that they Eſter 1.13. were wiſe Counſellors; and among the Romans it is a Proverbiall Adage, *homo omnium horarum*, that is, hee is a wiſe man that is a man for all houres, knowes the buſineſſe of every time, of every place, whatſoever hee is called to, hee underſtands his affaires; and in truth this may well bee *called* wiſedome, for *it is* wiſedome; it is not onely a part of wiſedome, but it is the very Syſteme and comprehenſion of all wiſedome: I know there is a particular wiſedome that men may have in ſome affaires, Eſay 28.16. as a Husbandman that knowes but how to plough his ground ſeaſonably, &c. that is called his wiſedome; and Exod.36. the women that did but know how to ſpin finely, &c. Men may have a kind of wiſedome in this or that particular trade, and yet all the world may know him to bee a foole in everything elſe; but that that is the true and reall wiſedome which properly ſets a man out to goe for What wiſedome is. a wiſe man, properly ſtands in the true underſtanding of the times, in reference to mens duties.

For both Philoſophers and Divines doe agree, that wiſedome is made up of theſe two things; the one is, Intelligence, which is nothing but the underſtanding of things in their nature, as they are good or evill; the

other

other is Sapience, which is the ſame underſtanding applyed to particular buſineſſes, as they ſtand veſted with all their circumſtances: and that man that hath the underſtanding of affaires, as they are circumſtantianted with all things that goe with them, and knowes how hee may dexterouſly and opportunely apply himſelfe to them, hee is the wiſe man, that is the firſt proofe, *that the Spirit of God every where calls this wiſedome.* Secondly,

2. The ſame Spirit of God doth uſually call the want of this, folly; whatſoever other excellencies meete in any man, if they want this, the Scripture calls them fooles; yea hypocrites, wicked ones, in the 8. of *Jeremiah*, the Lord ſpeakes in the 6, 7, 8, 9. Verſes, after this manner, *How doe you ſay you are wiſe?* why doe you pretend to wiſedome, (and hee ſpeakes not to the vulgar people, but to the Scribes, their learnedſt men, that could handle their tongues and their pens beſt) there was no wiſedome in them, they were fooles; Why? becauſe (ſaith God) *the Storke, and the Crane, and the Swallow know their ſeaſons, but this people knowes not the time of my judgements*; and therefore the Lord would not have them pretend to any wiſedome, but bee contented to bee counted fooles, becauſe they were ignorant of this: and our bleſſed Saviour in the 16. of *Matthew*, when the Scribes and Phariſees, and the learned Doctors of the Law came and deſired to have ſome further evidence from him, by ſome ſigne from heaven, that hee was the Meſſias; Chriſt told them they were Hypocrites, they were a ſinfull and an adulterous Generation, meerely becauſe they did not underſtand the ſignes of the times, A wicked and an adulterous generation would have more light: you can tell by the Clouds when it will bee faire weather next morning, and you can gueſſe by the morning whether it will be rain; but yee hypocrites, yee fooles (ſaith hee) you cannot

Jer. 8. 6, 7, 8.

Matth. 16. 1, 2, 3, 4.

diſcerne the ſignes of the times, what the times ſignifies, and calls for at your hands, you have no underſtanding of this, and therefore you may goe for a company of fooles, and hypocrites, and ſo left them and departed. Nay, thirdly, which makes it yet more cleare,

3. The want of this knowledge of the times in reference to mans dutie, is that which the Spirit of God uſes to render as the onely cauſe of a peoples ruine: whenſoever a people are brought to ruine, if they be a people to whom God afforded meanes to ſave them, when they come to be ruin'd, the Lord layes it wholly upon this, *that they knew not the times of their viſitation.* This you'le find in the 19. of *Luke*, and the latter end of it, when Chriſt about the 41. Verſe, came to take his farefull of *Jeruſalem* and to die there; from the top of the Mountaine he looked over the Citie and fell aweeping, O (ſaith hee) *that thou hadſt but known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace, but they are hid from thy eyes*; then hee goes on and tells them what ſhall become of them, *the enemies ſhall caſt a banke and not leave one ſtone upon another, levell them to the ground and their Children in them*; for what I pray? *becauſe thou knew'ſt not the time of thy viſitation*: deſtruction came in onely at that breach, they knew not the time of their viſitation; and elſewhere our Lord ſaith, in the latter end of the world, when ruine ſhall come, it will bee then, as it was in the dayes of *Noah*, and as it was in the dayes of *Lot*, men ſhall bee eating and drinking, and marrying wives, *but know nothing* they ſhould do for their ſalvation till utter ruine come upon them. I hope now the truth of this Leſſon is cleare out of the Scripture.

Luke 19. 41. 44.

Matth. 24. Luke 17.

But if you pleaſe to goe a little further yet, and conſider the excellency and difficulty of this wiledome to know the times, how much depends upon it, & how much is required to it, you'l bee fully ſatisfied, that a greater commendation

mendation can never bee given of any man, or any people, then this, that they know the times in reference to their duties: and that I may open what belongs to the making up of this worke, I beseech you give mee leave to open these six Conclusions out of the Scripture, which all much concerne this wisedome of knowing the times in reference to dutie. First,

The right understanding of the times opened out of the Scripture in 6. Conclusions.

That time is one of the most pretious treasures that ever God bestowes upon any man, or any people; 1. becauſe time is the onely measure out of which God powres out all his administrations. 2. Time it is the onely space in which men are to doe all their worke. 3. It's so pretious that God would have men value it one to another: if any man had hurt another, hee must not onely pay for his healing, *but hee must pay for the losse of his time.* Yea, 4. God calls upon his people to redeeme it at any rate; *Redeeme the time, redeeme the time,* as if there were no commoditie, that the God of heaven would so commend unto men (next to his truth) that wee should buy so eagerly, as wee should purchase time. Yea, 5. it is so pretions, that Hee who is at that great cost to make and contrive it, as to cause the Sunne every day to run about the world, and all those excellent creatures in the firmament to make it their work, for the continuation of time will call men to accompt for every moment, for every minute of it: That is my first Conclusion, that time is a pretious Jewell in Gods account, and ought to be so in all people's. Secondly,

Concluſ. 1.

Exod. 21. 19.

Ephes. 5. 16. Col. 4. 5.

God hath joyned time and dutie inseparably one to another; so that there is no dutie, but it hath an appointed time for it, and there is no time, but it hath an appointed dutie for it; it's disputable whether there bee a *vacuum* in nature or no, it is most certaine there is no *vacuum* in time: No man ever lives to see that minute of time, nor that ragge or cranny of time, of which hee may truely say at this time,

Coneluſ. 2. Eccles. 3. 1, 2, &c.

time, I have nothing at all to doe; but the Lord hath measured out to all times some dutie or other: this our Saviour saith expresly, *Matth.6.34.* when hee would disswade men from troubling themselves to day with the duties that belong to to-morrow, hee useth this argument among others, Trouble not your selves for to morrow, *for to morrow day hath trouble enough of its owne, sufficient for every day is the trouble of it*; the care, the worke, the dutie of every day that passeth over our heads is enough to fill the day, that is the second, that God hath joyned time and dutie together. Thirdly,

Matth. 6.

Conclus. 3. *There are some great duties that are to bee concurrent in the practise of all men, with every moment of their lives*: My meaning plainly is this, the great businesse of glorifying God, of saving our immortall soules, of keeping a good conscience, of working out our salvation, these great things are not set off by God to any set time, but they are to be concurrent with every moment of a mans time; Trust in the Lord *at all times*; have respect to Gods Commandements *at all times*; Blessed are they that doe justice and judgement *at all times*; bee yee alwayes ready for your masters comming: And of those excellent men *Josiah* and others, it is recorded that they looked to Gods Commandements *all their dayes*; so that the great matters of glorifying God, saving our soules, looking for our Masters comming, &c. these duties are to bee concurrent with all our time. Fourthly,

Esay 26. Psal. 106.3. Psal. 62. 8. 119. 20.

Conclus. 4. *Severall times*, I meane the severall compositions of times, or Scenes, or Junctures of times, *have their severall and peculiar duties laid out for every man by God himself*: my meaning is this, there is a time of *youth*, a time of *age*, a time of *prosperitie*, a time of *adversitie*, a time of *comfort*, a time of *trouble*, a time of *warre*, a time of *peace*, and a hundred other severall frames, and compositions, and junctures,

junctures of time. Now ſo often as God doth make a new Scene of the time, every man hath ſome new duty or other to act; his part requires that hee ſhould act ſome new thing; the Scripture is full of ſuch expreſſions as theſe, *in the times of proſperitie doe thus, in the time of adverſitie doe thus, in the time of the Goſpel doe thus, &c.* Now to know the time, and the ſeverall duties belonging to every time, is one of the hardeſt things that belong to the taske of man, this wiſedome lies in the deepe; it is a difficult thing to find out what the duties are that belong to the ſeverall times. But then fiftly,

That the Booke of God, and onely the Booke of God, is able to informe them who faithfully ſtudy it, in all the duties that doe belong to every new poſture or face of time. Firſt I ſay, *onely Gods Booke* can do it, there are Bookes of excellent wiſedome written by other men, but take them all together, let a man bee never ſo verſed in them, they will never diſcover to him every duty that belongs to every time, but the Booke of God can doe it if men have their ſenſes exerciſed in the ſtudy of it; there is no time ſo intricate, no dutie ſo arduous, but the booke of God will teach all men, from the Miniſter to the Hearer, from the Prince to the Subject, to make every one of them perfect in all the workes which belong to them. Pſalme 19. 7. it is ſaid, *the Word gives underſtanding to the ſimple*; and in the third of the *Proverbs*, Verſ. 21, 22, 23 *In all thy wayes acknowledge her, and thou ſhalt walke in thy way ſafely, and thy foot ſhall not ſtumble; when thou lieſt downe thou ſhalt not bee afraid, &c.* Doe but get wiſedome into thy heart, get acquaintance with Gods Word, it will direct thee in all thy wayes, whether to the right hand or to the left, at every turning place it will ſay, *here is thy way*, and theſe muſt bee thy ſteps. Sixtly, and principally,

Concluſ. 5.

Pſal. 19. 7, 8.

Prov. 3. 21, 22, 23.

Eſay 30, 21.

As there are ſeverall times, and ſeverall duties annex-

Concluſ. 6.

ed to theſe times, ſo in every time for any duty, *there is ſome partitle of that time, which is the opportunitie of the dutie*, the ſeaſon of the dutie: there is *the ſpace of time*, and *there is the ſeaſon of time*; the ſpace of time is nothing but the continuation and ſucceſſion of ſo many minutes and moments one of another; but the ſeaſon of time, or opportunitie of it, is time apted and fitted, to doe a buſineſſe. Now theſe two doe very much differ one from another, the one of them the length, the duration of time, the Greeks calls χρόνος, but the ſeaſon, the opportunitie is called καιρὸς, which is the *tempus commodum*, the tempeſtivitie of time, the ripeneſſe of time: and this indeed is properly time in reference to dutie. And concerning theſe ſeaſons of time or times fitted for buſineſſe, be pleaſed to conſider theſe five things, I ſhall need onely to name them, becauſe I ſpeake to an underſtanding people.

1 *That any worke to be done is done eaſily if the opportunitie be taken*; take opportunitie by the forelock, and any buſineſſe whatſoever is to bee done, will bee done with eaſe; not onely becauſe opportunitie is the ripeneſſe of time, but becauſe in opportunities *God offers* to worke with us, and for us: Now you know any buſineſſe that muſt bee done by the helpe of another, is then eaſily done, when both parties joyne in it. Two Men that are to lift up a burthen, if they both lift together, and take the *Hae, now*, it goes up eaſily. A veſſell that is to be driven, if the Watermen ply the Oares, the wind & tide go with them, the veſſell is carried eaſily; Now (I ſay) the Lord offers himſelfe to come in to a people when there is a fit opportunitie, then he holds up his hand, and ſaith, Now lift, and I'le lift with you, now row, and my Word ſhall blow with you; ſuch Scripture as theſe are frequent, *In an accepted time I have heard thee, and I will heare thee in an acceptable time*; *In a day of ſalvation I will ſuccour thee*, in an op-

2 Cor. 6. 2.

portune

portune time: God offers to come in and helpe, if opportunitie bee taken; This made the heathens esteeme opportunitie a goddesse.

As things are easie when men take opportunities, so 2
they are then beautifull; the beautie and grace of every dutie, both with God and man, is, when it is done in its fit season; the righteous man in the first Psalme, is compared to the Tree that brings forth his fruit in his season, *suum in suo*, his owne fruit, and in his proper *season*; *God* (saith *Solomon*) *hath made every thing beautifull in its season*; all Gods works are beautifull in their season, and so are all mens workes too: *A word spoke in season, is like Apples of Gold in pictures of Silver*; *and a good word in season, O how comfortable it is.* Thirdly, Psal 1.3. Eccles.3.11. Prov.25.11. Prov.15.23.

But know, *that these Opportunities are wondrous hard to find out*; very difficult it is for men to know the true season or opportunitie of a businesse: men may know times and seasons wel enough in particular businesses, the seasons for tilling the ground, and breeding and breaking of Cattle, &c. In such low and triviall things in comparison, seasons may easily bee knowne, but in the great morall affaires, that concerne God and mens soules, the difficultest thing that lies before man, is, to finde out the true season when they are to bee done; this *Solomon* sets downe most excellently in the eighth of *Ecclesiastes*, Verse *6. Because to every purpose there is required time and judgement, therefore the misery of man is great upon him*; marke that expression, most men are miserable, because a businesse cannot bee done, without a fit season and judgement to know it: as if *Solomon* had said thus, The truth is, opportunities are so *rare*, oft-times so sudden, so violent, so short, the wind seldome blowing long in an opportune point, and men so ignorant, so blinded with prejudice, with vaine hopes or feares, that most men are miserable in that they cannot find out the true season of a businesse, 3. Eccles.8,6. opened.

and thereby intimates that in every buſineſſe the moſt difficult part of the worke is the right timing of it. I adde fourthly,

That *when opportunities are paſt, if they bee let ſlip, they are oftentimes altogether irrecoverable*; and the buſineſſe is either wholly loſt, or never better then halfe done; it may coſt more to patch up a buſineſſe out of ſeaſon, then required to have done it beautifully if the ſeaſon had been taken; As the ſtory goes of the *Sibylls* bookes, they were faine to give the full price for one, which would have bought all three, when two of them were burnt. *Poſt eſt occaſio calva.* Unleſſe God make another opportunitie, man can never call opportunitie back againe. Opportunities are Gods
Heb. 12.17. fitting of time to buſineſſe, & none but God can thus fit it; therefore you ſhall find *Eſau* would have repented and got
Matth. 25. the bleſſing, he wept and cryed for it, yet miſſed it, he might have had it once without weeping and crying, but he loſt the ſeaſon, and the ſeaſon being gone, hee could never recover it with all his weeping: So the fooliſh Virgins came with their Lampes, pretending to have got ſome oyle, and cryed, *Lord open to us*, but the ſeaſon was paſt, and there was no entrance; the truth is, ſeaſons are to buſineſſes as money is to wares, hee that would buy a commoditie upon a market day, when poſſibly the commoditie is very cheape, may then have it for laying out his money, loſe but that market, poſſibly ten market dayes will not helpe him againe with it, and either never buy it or give a greater rate for that which is not ſo good as the other would have been; if opportunities bee once paſt over, without the Lord create them againe, men are utterly loſt in their
5. buſineſſes. Fiftly, and laſtly,

As theſe opportunities are excellent, and hard to find, and irrecoverable if they bee loſt: So in the laſt place, know, *that no wiſedome, no learning, nothing but a gratious heart guided by the Spirit of God, doth know how to take opportunities*

portunities in time, for the great buſineſſes that concerne God and his glory, no wiſedome but the wiſedome of grace, and Gods Spirit guiding the heart, doth ever know to doe buſineſſes in their right ſeaſons. In other things (as I ſaid before) they may bee taken, naturall men may plow and ſow in ſeaſon, &c. Yea, men may ſenſibly underſtand the times, ſo as to mourne for the afflictions of them, ſo as to rejoyce in the good of them; and wicked men by a deviliſh wiſedome can take the ſeeming opportunities, to promote their owne wicked deſignes; the harlot can take the opportunitie of her husbands abſence, the thiefe the opportunitie of the twilight, and ſo every man the ſeeming opportunitie of things that are of the Devill, for Satan helpes them; but to know the opportunities of the things that concerne God and our ſoules, nothing but a gratious heart enables a man to doe it: the Scripture is very plaine for this, *Solomon* expreſſes it notably in the tenth of *Eccleſiaſtes*, Verſ. 2. *A wiſe mans heart is at his right hand, but a fooles heart is at his left*; the meaning is this, when a buſineſſe is to be done, & the right ſeaſon for it, the wiſe man, a gracious man hath his hand ready, and his heart to joyne with his hand, he is alwayes dexterous at it, but a fooles (*i. e.* a wicked mans) heart, when his buſineſſe is to bee done, his heart is at his left hand, every finger is a Thumbe, hee cannot manage it: but more clearely *Solomon* expreſſeth this, *Prov.* 17. Verſ. 16. *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a foole to buy wiſedome, ſeeing he hath no heart to it?* Let a wicked man have opportunities, give him wealth, give him honour, give him meanes of grace, give him any thing that may helpe to wiſedome, hee hath no heart to it: So alſo ſaith *Daniel*; *Dan.* 12. 10. ſpeaking of underſtanding the times, *none of the wicked ſhall underſtand, but the wiſe ſhall, the godly ſhall.*

Eccleſ. 10. 2. opened.

Prov. 17. 16. opened.

Dan. 12. 10.

Thus I have done with the Doctrinall part of it, and by this time I hope you all grant, that it is a matter of wonderfull concernement, of admirable wisedome and commendation, to have understanding of the times and seasons, so as rightly to discharge their owne duties:

Application in two Uses.

I now come to the Application of it, wherein I shall onely insist upon two Uses, the one is,

For *Humiliation*, in reference to time past, to seasons and opportunities which are past and lost. The other shall be,

For *Exhortation*, in reference to the *time to come*, that wee may learne this excellent wisedome to know the times and seasons so as to lose no more of them. For the first,

Use 1. Humiliation.

Is it such a singular commendation, so excellent a wisedome, a matter of so great moment and consequence, to know the times in reference to duty? O what cause of lamentations is there: First,

1 In generall to all.

In generall to us all: a man might in this case fill such a booke as *Ezekiels* roule was, with weeping, and lamentation and mourning: Here is a great Assembly gathered together to mourn upon a day of mourning, and if ever any Doctrine that ever I have preached might call for mourning at all your hands, I am perswaded this doctrine calls for it from every one of us; God bee mercifull to us, wee have all been fooles, we have not knowne the times of our visitation, wee have knowne the times to talke of them, sometimes to inveigh against them, crying out, they are the worst times that ever were; but for this knowledge of my Text (wherein true wisedome should appeare) to know the times in reference to our duties, I feare I may say as *Paul* said of the *Corinthians*, *hardly one wise man to bee found amongst us*. One said, (I know not how truely) of the *Helvetians*, that he travelled through their Country, and found that there are *toti pagi repleti fatuis*, *whole Villages inhabited by none but fooles*; Truly (beloved)

(beloved) not onely our Country Villages, but our market townes, and our Cities, and I pray God it prove not that our Parliament and Assemblies are all filled with fooles in this great point, few or none of us know the times in reference to our duties. Let mee speake freely to you, God hath cast the lot of all of us in such times as have been filled with such administrations, as the like could not have been in the space of these 1000 yeers; and confident I am, that hee that loses these times wherein we have lived, would never have redeemed any time; and yet notwithstanding, have not wee, O have not wee all usually put off to the future, the duties that belong to the present time, and done in the present time, the things that should never have been done at all? Have not most of us lived all our dayes, as if God had made us for the World, as *Leviathan* for the Sea, onely to take our pleasure in it? others of us to fill our shops with commodities, our purses with money, our houles with stuffe and provision, as if there had been no better things to have been regarded? when in the meane time for the admirable opportunities wee have had for the glorifying of God, and the saving of our soules, as if these had been nothing worth; woe unto us, wee have done any thing rather then make improvement of them: and as rich people will give any poore people leave to goe into their Pease-fields to gather lapfulls of their Peale, as being things of little worth, so have wee allowed any thing to take up our time, sporting, and eating, and prating, and sleeping, and such things that are of little concernment. O how much of our pretious time have they devoured and wee regard it not: what cause have we to tremble at the thought of it: I beseech you tell me, if God should come now, and say to any Nobleman, Gentleman, Minister, Citizen, or other that is here, I have given thee 20. yeers, 40. yeers, three-

score

ſcore yeers of time, I have filled thy time with glorious opportunities, as excellent as ever I gave to any, the leaſt of them worth a world, give in your Bill of accompt what you have done with theſe? what improvement you have made of them? how have you walked I beſeech you? what accompt could you make? would it not appeare that you have ſpent many houres and dayes in riot and wantonneſſe, ſporting and playing, in ſwearing and curſing, in contriving and acting that which is evill and miſchievous, and very few minutes for your God, & for your ſoule, for obtaining eternall life, happineſſe, or doing good to your brethren: God bee mercifull to us, wee could not anſwer him one word for a thouſand, wee have all cauſe to lie in the duſt, and acknowledge we have been fooles, and not knowne the things that belonged to our peace, not regarded the time of our viſitation.

2. More particularly to the Parliament.

But (Honorable and beloved) give me leave to bring this leſſon nearer to you, who have called mee this day to preach, and let me make a more through enquirie after your wiſedome in this particular, becauſe you are look'd upon as the wiſe men of the Land that know the times better then others; I am confident you doe not deſire to bee flattered any day, but this day I hope that will bee moſt acceptable which in a way of God could moſt effectually humble and abaſe you, and you have put a neceſſitie upon mee, to deale freely and faithfully with your ſoules. Have not you, honored and worthy Patriots and Senators, infinite cauſe to bemoane this, that you have not knowne the times in reference to your duties?

Firſt, be pleaſed to view the times you lived while you were private Gentlemen, before you were called to theſe publique ſervices, when you lived in your ſeverall Countries; where I know by reaſon of your wealth, and parts, and intereſts, and ſtates, you had abundance of opportu-

nities

nities more then other people had, to have done much ſervice, to have made the times and places better for you. Did you then thus know the times? did you then walke as wiſe men, redeeming the times? did you know what God expected from you in your places, and have you done it? O bleſſed yee, if you have: But (I beſeech you) will it not rather appeare upon a true ſearch, that many of you in thoſe dayes walked in the wayes of riot, in uncleanneſſe, in drunkenneſſe, poſſibly in ſwearing, in prophaning Gods holy time, in oppoſing and ſcorning Religion, was it not thus? it behoves you to ſearch; did you not make your owne Families, the Townes and Lordſhips where you lived the worſe for you, as ſo many *Jeroboams* cauſing *Iſrael* to ſinne? did not you thereby helpe to pull downe thoſe judgements that have beene like to devoure and deſtroy this whole Land? and if ſo, have you beene humbled under theſe things? have you ſince repented of them? or do they ſtill ſtand upon your ſcore before that God that keeps an exact accompt of all the Talents that ever hee hath put into your hands? I beſeech you enquire into it; but let me goe further, and enquire whether ſince the time that God hath ſeparated you from your brethren, and by a notable providence called you out to be the heads of all our Tribes, have you ſince that time knowne the times in reference to your duties? It is now above ſix yeers ſince many of you have beene called to this worke, one of the greateſt workes that mortall men have beene imployed in theſe many hundreds of yeers, a work wherein you have beene aſſiſted not onely with the prayers and teares of thoſe that feare God, throughout the Chriſtian world, but with the ſtates and blood of many, and God himſelfe hath carried you in his boſome, and made you the moſt remarkable handfull of men, that I thinke this day breath upon the earth, in regard of the mercies that hee

hath ſhewed you, and in this time (certaine I am) hath put into your hands as many golden opportunities, not onely required as many duties, but put as many golden opportunities into your hands to eſtabliſh our wretched kingdome, and to reſcue a decayed, lukewarme, Apoſtatized Church, as ever were put into the hands of a Parliament. Now (beloved) have you known your times, and taken your opportunities? I know it well, that you have wreſtled with huge difficulties, infinite oppoſitions, and I know that oft-times the perverſneſſe of a Patient poyſoning his owne diſeaſe or wounds may fruſtrate the care of the beſt Phyſitians; and God forbid, that that which is onely your miſery, ſhould ever bee imputed to you as your ſinne; but ſuppoſe upon a diligent ſearch, any of you that are called to bee our wiſe men, to know the times for us, that at your doore it ſhould lie in great part, that our miſeries are not yet healed, how ſad would that bee? To this end I moſt humbly pray you inquire, if upon a diligent ſearch there ſhould bee found among you any who at this day live in the ſame ſinfull, riotous, ungodly, wicked converſation that they led, before God called them to this publique ſervice: that after your ſolemne oath, with your hand lifted up to the moſt high God for the reformation of your wayes, that you ſhould bee found ſtill with *Zimri* and *Cozbi*, to live in thoſe ſinnes for which God is judging this Nation; *Were this to know the times, and what Iſrael hath to doe?* Suppoſe further, there ſhould bee found amongſt you any ſuch as ſhould ordinarily neglect the publique ſervice, and turne your backs upon it, to attend your own private affaires, after that the Kingdome hath put into your hands whatſoever under God is pretious and deare unto them; *were this to know the times and what Iſrael hath to doe?* Suppoſe there ſhould bee found amongſt you any that ſhould ſeeke ad-

vantage

vantage to themſelves out of publique calamities, or ſhould ſinfully helpe to undoe thoſe for whom they are called to bee Saviours; *were this to know the times?* Suppoſe that any of you ſhould bee found unjuſt in judgement, and favour an unrighteous man in his cauſe, either for corrupt gaines or out of oppoſition to them you like not, and ſo proſtrate the untainted honour of the Parliament to the reproach of the adverſaries, the ſcandall of the Nation, the teares and griefe of them who love you; *were this to know the times, and what Iſrael hath to doe?* Suppoſe it ſhould bee found that there ſhould bee any that in matters of *Religion* ſhould ſide with a partie for corrupt and ſinfull ends, and make Religion but an Engine to carry on ſome other ſinfull deſigne; *were this to know the times and what Iſrael had to doe?* Suppoſe yet further, that upon a diligent ſearch there ſhould be found among you any that doe retard matters of the greateſt moment; that the ſetling of Religion ſhould bee obſtructed by you, that many people abroad are remiſſe in it, becauſe they judge you have no heart to it; *were this to know the time, and what Iſrael hath to doe?* Suppoſe that the cries and teares of the oppreſſed, I meane not the fatherleſſe and widowes, (whom I am confident the Houſes of Parliament would helpe this very day, if it lay in their power) but the cries of ſome oppreſſed by Committees or others in the Countrey, ſhould come up to you and ſeeke for ſuccour, and it ſhould bee found that ſome of you ſhould patronize the wrong-doers, and keepe them off from comming to a hearing, and thereby from redreſſe; *were this to know the times, and what Iſrael had to doe?* Honorable, and Worthy, doe not miſtake mee, I am farre from ſaying it is ſo, I onely ſuggeſt theſe things to your owne ſearch, and if in naming the particulars I miſtake any of them, God knowes it is with the ſame ſingleneſſe of

heart, wherewith *Job* sanctifyed his Children, sacrificed for them, saying, *Peradventure my sonnes have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts*; sure I am it concernes you all to search and try; for if it should be so, wee are all like to smart for it, for as he said of the Roman Senate, *Ita nati estis ut bona malaque vestra ad rempub. pertineant*, Your condition is such, that your good and your evill, is the good and evill of the Commonwealth; it belongs to us all: and should the great God find any of you walking thus unworthy of the great trust hee hath committed to you, when hee hath put (as it were) the fates of his Church and Kingdome in your hands, under him to dispose of them, his wrath would bee kindled against you, these things would lie very heavy upon your score, and wee and you should dearely rue it. Sure I am, there is not a man of us, but for some or other of these things, hath just cause to lay his hand upon his heart with sorrow, and to put his mouth in the dust, and this day to bee very deepely humbled and abased before God. And this is the first Use, a Use of Humiliation, that wee have not in time past, so knowne the times as wee should in reference to our duties. There is one more, and that is,

Use 2. A Use of Exhortation; Is this so excellent and necessary a dutie, to know the times in reference to our duties? O that I knew how to speake somewhat in the name of the Lord, that might promote this wisedome in you for time to come, that in this our day wee might know the things that concerne our peace, that they may not be for ever hid from our eyes; O that I could say to you, as *Paul* said to the *Thessalonians*: *Concerning the times and seasons, it is superfluous for mee to write to you, for you your selves know perfectly.* To this end I beseech you take briefly these foure Meditations to provoke you to study this wisedome in time to come. First,

Exhortation. 1. In generall to all, to indeavour after this wisedome.

1 Thes. 5. 1.

Motives thereto.

Often

Often consider how much time, & how many golden opportunities thou hast lost already; how oft there hath been in thy hands a price to purchase Wisdome, and thou hast lost it for want of a heart; and then thinke whether it bee not more then needfull that thou shouldest lose no more. Secondly, 1.

Consider how much doth depend upon that moment of time that yet is behinde; It is an old saying, *Our life is but a moment*, but *Ex hoc momento pendet æternitas*, Eternity dependeth upon this moment; no lesse then the glory of God, and the saving of thy immortall soule, and it may bee of thy family, it may bee of the Church and Kingdome, dependeth upon thy knowing the times. Thirdly, 2

Consider thou canst not tell, whether ever thou shalt enjoy after this day one opportunity more; the Angel may quickly come and sweare concerning thee and mee, *Time shal be no more.* And then Fourthly, 3

Consider when Time ceases to bee any more, thou must give an accompt for all the time that hath been; that certainly at the barre and Tribunall of God, all the Times and seasons that God hath trusted thee with, stand upon thy score, and will bee exacted of thee: *Rejoyce O young man* (saith *Solomon* in the 11 of *Ecclesiastes*) *in thy youth, and let thy heart cheare thee in the dayes of thy youth, and walke in the wayes of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes*; take thy pleasures, waste thy seasons, *but know that for all these things thou must come to judgement.* Such Meditations as these would provoke your hearts to bee very carefull to lose no more time; but rather to enquire what you should doe for time to come, and how you might learne this Wisdome: And truly, it would fill a Volume, to tell *what* every one should doe, *from what* wee should redeeme our time, and *to what* wee 4.

ſhould redeeme it, and *by what* meanes wee ſhould doe it.

2 In particular to the Honorable Members o fthis Houſe.

I dare not enter upon that diſcourſe: But there is one thing wherein I deſire freedome, that I might be as helpfull as I can to the Honourable Senate that hath called me to the ſervice of this day: Honourable and Beloved, God hath caſt your lot ſo, that if you be rightly inſtructed in this one Leſſon, you may make our times differ as much from former times, as *Nebuchadnezzars* Golden head did from the feet of iron and clay; Golden times indeed might bee brought about, if God vouchſafed but to teach you this one Leſſon. Your duties are many, for whatſoever lies upon any other, lies eminently upon you; You are to doe all thoſe things in every time, that others are to doe; and you are to doe many things that others cannot doe, and may not doe: That you may therefore know your duty, give mee leave to repreſent before you the true face of our Times wherein wee live, and ſhew what in theſe Times you have to doe, and herein I will not preſume to put any Prudentialls upon you, (we ought all to thinke that Prudentialls are better underſtood by you, then by us) but what ſhall I ſay, ſhall (God willing) appeare to be matter of Conſcience, matters of neceſſity, and things that may not bee left to liberty; Know then our preſent times,

Daniel 2.

The face of our preſent times repreſented.

Firſt, in generall, full of changes. Joel 1. 2.

Firſt in generall, are ſuch Times, as I thinke never were before us in the World; I may ſay of our times, as the Prophet *Joel* ſaith in the 1 of *Joel*, *Heare O yee old men, was it ever thus in your dayes, or in the dayes of your forefathers?* I meane, our times are ſo full of various adminiſtrations, ſuch a concurrence of all kinde of Providences and Adminiſtrations, as ſeldome were ever knowne in ſo few yeares; Wee have been ſometimes full of hopes of recovery, ſometimes at the brinke of deſpaire, ſometimes dawnings of light, by and by all clouded over againe with

with utter darkneſſe; ſometimes we ſee a people drawing nigh to God that hides his face from them, by and by God drawing nigh to a people that run away from him; ſuch alterations, ſuch viciſſitudes of all kindes of adminiſtrations, that truly I may compare our times to the wind mentioned in the firſt of *Eccleſiaſtes*, *It whirles about continually, now in the North, and then in the South, and never abides in one Point:* So hath it been with us for theſe foure or five laſt yeares: this day of ours hath been like that day in the 14 of *Zachariah*, *neither night nor day, nor light nor darkneſſe*, but a ſtrange kinde of mixture of all theſe, and in ſuch various and uncertaine Times as theſe are, what *have the heads of our Tribes to doe?* I anſwer plainly, all others with you, and you with others, are in ſuch dayes to ſtand and behold the Workes of God, viewing and admiring, and adoring theſe Moſaick works, theſe Checquer workes of God, but it concernes you above all others, to ſtand conſtantly upon your watch, and employ all your Parts and Wiſdome, and Faithfulneſſe, leſt a change of time take you upon a ſudden. As when a Ship is at Sea, if it ſaile to the Weſtward, and once get beyond the *Canaries*, where the Sea ſets conſtantly one way, and ſtate-winds blowing for ſo many Moneths together in one Point, a moderate skill and care of him that guides the Helme, wil carry them on with eaſe; but in various winds, and tumultuous Seas, when they ſaile ſometimes among Rocks, and ſometimes among Quickſands, ſometimes in Gulfes, ſometimes in the Ocean, ſometimes almoſt at the Shoare, if the Pilot be not extreame skilfull and carefull, himſelfe, his Barque, and all that are with him are quickly caſt away: So I am aſſured is it now with us in theſe various adminiſtrations; you that are our Pilots, that ſit at the Sterne, muſt ſhew more then ordinary skill and diligence, or we may quickly periſh. But

Etcleſ. 1. 6.

Zach. 14. 6, 7.

Pſalm 107. 43.

More

2 More particularly our times are opened in 7 Particulars.

More particularly, there are ſeven ſeverall Scenes of the Time (if I may ſo call them) or ſorts of things, that every day are acted upon our Stage, and in every one of them I ſhal ſhew you, what you that are the Heads of our Tribes have to doe. First,

1. Our times are times of prodigious wickednes in mens converſations.

Our times are times of moſt prodigious wickedneſſe, horrible abominations in mens manners; I am confident, never ſuch abominable drunkenneſſe, and generall looſeneſſe in that kinde; never more univerſall liberty of whoring Inceſtuous mariages, oppreſſions, cruelty, injuſtice, malice, revenge, and every thing that might fill a Land with ungodlineſſe. Since wee or our fore-Fathers were borne, never was there a greater deluge of wickedneſſe, then in theſe our times; and *what have the Heads of Iſrael to doe at ſuch a time?* Certainely you, and all others at ſuch times are called to mourne for all the abominations of the Times; and you, and all others are called to walke more exactly, in that time, to redeeme the time when the dayes are evill: But *You* above all others are called out by God, in ſuch times, to be his inſtruments, to oppoſe theſe things, the *Miniſters of God, to execute vengeance upon thoſe that do evill*: For theſe things, I think you ſhall not need to trouble your ſelves to make new Lawes, as excellent Lawes are already made againſt them all, as I thinke any Common-wealth in the world hath, but it concernes you to ſee that theſe bee put in execution; It concernes you in times of oppreſſion to deliver the poore and the oppreſſed, out of the Talons and Pawes of them, who teare them and cruſh them in pieces; It concerns you to ſee that the Juſtices and other officers in the Countrey, ſet not up theſe houſes of Sinne, Alehouſes and Tavernes, nor that when ſome well-affected put them downe, Great men ſet them up againe; and ſo in other abominations it concernes you to ſee that inceſtuous

Ezekiel 9.

Ephes. 5. 15.

Rom. 12. 4

ſtuous Mariages and ſuch ungodlineſſes, go not unbranded and unpuniſhed; the Lord kindle zeale in your hearts, that you may doe it: that is one; *Our Times are times of abominable wickednesse.* Secondly,

Our times are times of Errors, horrible Errors, I meane not ſuch Errors as are to bee found among Gods people, to whom hee never hath given an equall light, and notwithſtanding which Errors himſelf beares with them, and would have his people bear one with another; but I meane our times are times of ſuch Errors as are heretical and blaſphemous, ſuch as concern our Chriſtian faith, and holy converſation, in a very high degree; it would weary you, but to tell you, the things that are generally knowne to ſpread as a Gangrene, a new generation of men are riſen up, and ſpread all the points of Arminianiſme, univerſall Redemption, Apoſtaſie from grace, Mans free-will; multitudes of others cry downe the Law, as not having any thing to do with Gods people; others denying that the Saints of God ſhould ever any more confeſſe ſinne to God in prayer; others queſtioning whether there bee any Church or Miniſtery this day upon the face of the earth, and whether there ſhall bee any till new Apoſtles ariſe: Nay, beyond all theſe, many denying the Lord Jeſus, that bought us with his blood, to bee God; or the Holy Ghoſt to bee God; others denying the three Perſons in the Trinity; and conſequently affirming that we, and all the Chriſtian world with us, doe worſhip Idols in ſtead of God, for if theſe men bee right, they are Idols whom wee worſhip. Theſe, and abundance of ſuch horrid things as theſe are, doe ſpread and ſcatter like wilde-fire every where in all corners of the Land, to the great provocation of Gods wrath, & our reproach through the Chriſtian world. And *what have our Heads to doe at ſuch a time?* Certainly you, and al others ought to mourn for theſe

2. Our times are times of errors, hereſies, and blaſphemies.

things, and teare your clothes, and your haires, and your hearts, that God should be so dishonored, but for your duties who are in high Places, for what is peculiar to you, I'll not dispute any controversie at this time, but set down Two things which I know you must yeeld to. One is,

1. Certainly you must search diligently into the Scriptures, and enquire whether Jesus Christ would have you oppose your selves against these things that are so opposite to him; If upon a diligent search, you finde that hee hath not authorized you, doe not you arrogate any authority that Christ hath not given you; my Lie will never honour God, though I should tell it for Gods glory; and your thrusting your selves into an office, Christ hath not called you unto, will never be accepted by him. But if Secondly,

2. Upon a diligent search, it appeares hee hath given authority unto you, then I am as assur'd that hee hath not left it to your arbitrement, whether you'll use it, or no; hee hath not left it to your will, whether you will punish them, but if you have power to stop them, and doe not, hee will lay them all at your doores, and require them at your hands; therefore search diligently what you have power to doe, and then let not these things goe on, to Gods dishonour. But supposing you have authority, *What then is to be done?* I answer, you must not take Blasphemies, Errors, and Heresies to bee such upon the reports of other men, but as the Lord ordered them in the 13 of *Deuteronomie*, so likewise must you doe, *Search diligently whether indeed such and such things are done*; and when they appeare to bee done, out of the zeale of God, doe that against them which the Lord would have you doe; let not your Religion be thus contaminated, suffer not your children, to whom you ought to bee nursing Fathers, to bee thus poisoned by such corrupt Doctrines, nor devou-

Deut. 13.
Deut. 17.

red by such wolves: This I know you will all subscribe unto; This I desire above all may sticke with you, that if the Lord hath given you power, hee hath not given you libertie to forbeare such men; God in mercy make you zealous for him, that hath been zealous for you in all your troubles. Thirdly,

3. Our times are times of wrath.

Our times are times of wrath, a great deale of wrath from the Lord is gone forth; you know what dreadfull Vialls of wrath, have been poured out in blood; terrible quivers of destroying arrowes have been shot out in Pestilence, all which tell you God is angry: And what then have our Heads and Leaders to doe? certainly all people should tremble when God is angry; *The Lyon roares, what beast doth not tremble?* and every one must labour to pacifie him when hee is angry; but you whom the Lord hath placed under him in such high place and authority, must with *Moses* at such a time, call to *Aaron* to run with his Censer, you must labour to enquire out the Causes of it, and execute the judgement and vengeance that God would have executed upon them who have procured it; You must with *Josiah*, 2 *Kings* 22. 13. inquire what will appease him, and with the King of *Nineveh*, call upon every one to turne from the evill of his doings, and your selves bee examples to the rest. Fourthly,

Amos 18.

2 Sam. 21. 1.

2 Kings 22. 13. Ionah 3.

4. Our times are times of warre.

Our times are times of Warre, terrible warres, unnaturall warres, bloody warres, as ever *England* knew, and as yet the Armies are in the Field, and though there bee no open Enemy, the Sword is not put up, and in *Ireland*, poor wretched *Ireland*, the warre is more terrible, where if we labour not to end it by sending our brethren timely succours, the bloody enemy is like to come to make a new war upon us ere it be long; And in the times of warre, *what have the heads of our Tribes to do*? Certainly all people in a time of warre, should make it a time of mourning; *Eze-*

Ezek. 21. 10. *kiel* ſaith, *The Sword is furbiſhed and drawne, and made bright for ſlaughter, ſhould wee then make mirth?* Should this bee a time of jollitie? and all ſhould labour to finde out the Cauſes of the warre, what the Sword-procuring ſins are, and every one to repent and turne from them. But you that are our Heads, are to look to theſe 2 Things principally. Firſt,

1. That while the warre doth laſt, and muſt laſt, that our Campes and Armies may bee in ſuch a condition, that

Deut. 23. 9. God may not abhorre our Armies; *When the Hoſt goes forth to the battail, keepe thee from every evill thing.* And Secondly,

2. In the times of Warre, you ſhould alwayes labour after an honourable, ſafe, and juſt Peace; peace is the end of warre; *Pax una triumphis*, One peace is worth 100 Victories; and therefore you muſt principally addreſſe your ſelves to God, who alone can give us Peace: Kings and States may begin a warre, but God onely muſt end it; we may daube up a peace, and get counterfeits of peace, but all will bee *arena ſine calce*, Sand without lime, a mortar which will not hold, but as a ſwelling in a high wall, whoſe breach comes ſuddenly: Therefore remember againe and againe, your work lies with the God of Peace, pacifie him, and hee will create peace for you. Fifthly,

5. Our times are times of diviſions: Our Times are times of Diviſions, ſuch Diviſions, as (I thinke) were hardly ever knowne in the Chriſtian World; Diviſions every where, diviſions in Parliament, diviſions in the Aſſembly, diviſions in the Cities, diviſions in State affaires; but woe and alaſſe, moſt of all, and worſt of all, diviſions among Gods people, the Servants of God who heretofore prayed together, faſted together, could have beene baniſhed together, now, as if the curſe of *Simeon* and *Levi* were fallen upon them, they are divided in *Jacob*, and ſcattered in *Iſrael*; *Manaſſeh* is a-

againſt *Ephraim*, and *Ephraim* againſt *Manaſſeh*, and every one eates the fleſh of his owne arme, and through the wrath of the Lord, the Land is darkened and infatuated, by the miſerable diviſions of Gods owne people; and theſe diviſions are fomented, encouraged, and back'd by a Third il-affected party, who deſires that theſe Two, like wilde beaſts, may teare one another, and weaken one another, that they may devoure them both; and all this goes on thorough our ſinne: And truly wee are in my poore thoughts, as if God had left us to bee as *Moab*, and *Ammon*, and *Mount Seir*, where two ſtood up againſt one to deſtroy it, and then the other two to deſtroy one another; as the fooliſh Woman, wee are pulling downe our houſe with our owne hands. And now (Honorable and Beloved) in ſuch ſad & uncomfortable times as theſe are, *what have the Heads of our Iſrael to doe?* what doth the Lord looke for at your hands? Certainly you with others, and you above all others, ſhould labour to bee our Phyſitians, our *Æſculapiuſſes*, to joine our diſſever'd limbes, and if it bee poſſible, to make us one againe: Noble Senators, is there no way that your Wiſdome can contrive to make Pacification, Accommodation, and Reconciliation, but muſt wee goe on thus to ruine one another? Any ordinary head may ſerve to embroyle things, but here would bee the Maſter-piece of your Wiſdome, if you could find out a way how the envie of *Ephraim*, and the ill will of *Manaſſeh* might ceaſe, and that Gods people might yet bee reconciled and united, of one minde as farre as is poſſible, and made of one heart in thoſe lower things, wherein they cannot bee of one minde: Would God put this in your hearts, that you might ſpeedily and earneſtly ſet about it, that if there ſhould be found any *Animoſities* amongſt your ſelves, you would lay them down firſt, & all agree to ſtudy the Publike good, and then ſee what you

2 Chron. 20.

can doe to reconcile others in the Miniſtery, in the City, in the Countrey; ô that you could doe as *Conſtantine* did, who burnt all the Libells that were preſented to him from one Biſhop againſt another, and never left till hee had made peace among them. O that God would both inable you, and provoke you to ſet ſpeedily upon this worke, God, and his people have their eyes upon you, and expect you ſhould imploy all your Wiſdome, Piety, Parts, and Authority to extinguiſh thoſe flames which threaten ſpeedy ruine to us all.

6. Our times are times of Reformation.

Our times are times of Reformation; As they are times of ſinne and errour, and wrath, and warre, and diviſions, which all five are very ſad, ſo the other two are excellent, our times are times of Reformation; I mean, they are times not onely of much Goſpell light, but they are times of growing, and increaſing light, wherein the light of the Goſpell ſpreads more, and the Lord as in other parts of the world, ſo eſpecially amongſt us, ſeemes to bee laying out the platforme of his Temple, and to ſet out a new edition of his Church, fairer and more beautifull then ever; and *what have the Heads of our Tribes to doe* at ſuch a time? without all queſtion, very much of it will lie upon your hands under God, you have contended ſtifly and couragiouſly for our liberties, and properties, and to recover us from bondage and ſlavery, and God hath been with you in it; and although the kingdome doth not yet feele it, and ſo it may bee doth not greatly thank you, becauſe in deſperate diſeaſes, the cure is commonly more coſtly and more tedious then the diſeaſe is, but I doubt when God vouchſafes a ſettling they will finde the fruit of what you have done for them, and bleſſe God for you that are their healers. But know (I beſeech you) that our Religion is our moſt Orient Pearle, and that whereupon our heart

is most set, and if there should bee any miscariage in it all will perish with it, wee should call every thing elſe *Ichabod*, if Religion miscarry, all is gone; and therefore to provoke you to helpe us in this thing, let mee leave theſe two Concluſions in your boſomes. Firſt,

A Reformation begun, and not carried on, alwayes brings more wrath from God; you have begun the Reformation, you are engaged in it by oath and Covenant, and ſome happy proceeding and progreſſe you have made in it, God grant you ſlack not in it: For you'l finde in the Scriptures, a reformation begun and laid aſide is a peoples undoing; In *Elijahs* dayes there was a Reformation begun, it fell downe and the Kingdome periſhed with it. In *Joſiah's* time a Reformation was begun, and quickly laid aſide with the death of that good King, and the Kingdome was ruined preſently after it. In *Haggai* his dayes, the Reformation was begun, then laid aſide; God preſently ſmote them with Blaſting and Mildew, and would have undone them, if they had not taken it up againe: God lookes you ſhould carry this work on. And I adde,

Without ſetling Religion, you ſhall never ſettle the Common-wealth; Hee that writes a Booke of the corrupt and troubled ſtate of the Church, will hardly ever write a Booke of the quiet and ſetled State of the Commonwealth; Chriſt is King of Nations and Commonwealths as well as King of Saints: Now the glory of Chriſt is ſo much concerned in the matter of Religion, that they ſhall never finde him propitious to them, for their good in humane affaires, who neglect him in that that is deareſt to him. But *what have our Heads and Rulers to doe in that?* I feare not to ſay confidently, that they are miſtaken who ſay, you have nothing to doe with it; All the good Kings that ever I read of in the booke of God, thought not onely they had to doe with it, but it

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was their first work *a Jove principium*, they all began with it, they ever accounted the Reformation, & preservation, & propogation of Religion to be their Crown: but *what have you to doe?* I answer, you must with *David*, set your whole hearts to the house of your God, really and seriously; with *Solomon* set as many on worke as you can possibly, to prepare materialls for Gods house; with *Jehosaphat* send abroad as many faithfull Preachers as you can, to goe about and instruct the people from Towne to Towne, and Citie to Citie, till you can get Ministers to bee setled. With *Nehemiah* labour to build the walls of *Jerusalem*, though in a troublesome time, with a Sword in one hand and a Trowell in the other, set up discipline to bee a hedge and fence to the Churches. With *Hezekiah* labour to provide honorable maintenance for Gods house and his Ministers, that young men may not bee discouraged in their studies. For when young Students can see, *Galen* and *Justinian*, the study of the Law or Physick can give them wealth and honour, and the Ministry nothing but beggery, it will bee a great snare to them, though the worke of the Ministry bee honorable, and hath an abundant reward with God, yet for want of maintenance *the house of God will bee forsaken*; *Sint Mæcenates, non deerunt marones*: Men of parts must have incouragement, and in your provision for them forget not the Schooles of the Prophets, remember the Universities: Indeavour to carry on the worke, that the beautie and power of Religion may be promoted, and the Lord direct you to it. Seventhly, and lastly,

1 Chron. 29.

1 Kings 5.
2 Chron. 17. 7.
Nehemiah 8.
2 Chron 31.

Nehemiah 13. 11.

7. Our times are times of deliverances.

Our times are times of Deliverances, the greatest deliverances that I thinke the Lord hath wrought, since hee brought *Israel* out of *Egypt*; such deliverances as we our selves are like men in a dreame, such deliverances that there hath beene but few footsteps of ordinary Providence

dence in them; deliverances that have beene the fruit of Prayer, the fruit of Covenanting, the fruit of Fasting, and in all these the fruit of free grace, wherein the Lord hath exceeded not onely our Faith, but our Prayers, and hath measured out to us all that hee hath done by the shekel of the Sanctuary, his own shekel that is double of ours; I know, you forget not the wonderfull things the Lord hath done, *and what have our Heads to doe at such a Time?* Truly, all others with you, but you more then all, at such a time must bee carefull of these foure things;

First, God expects when hee workes deliverances, that his people should consider his workes, and stand amazed at it; *When the Lord turned the captivitie of Zion, wee were like men in a dreame, our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with joy*; The Lord (say they) hath done great things for us; Thus let us admire his works. 1. Psal. 126. 1, 2.

In times of deliverance, you must bee very carefull to pay your vowes; the vowes that you made in the time of your low condition; the vowes you made, when your Selves, and Liberties, and Religion, and the Kingdom were all like to bee buried quicke together; God expects in times of deliverance to have those vowes remembred and paid; consider what they were. Thirdly, 2. Psal. 50. 14. Psal. 66. 13, 14. Eccles. 5. 4.

When the Lord workes such deliverances, hee expects, and it will very well become the Heads of our Tribes, to keepe the same lowly and humble spirit, that they had while God kept them under afflictions; to have their eares as much opened to good counsell, when God hath exalted them, as when hee abased them; this is a hard lesson to learne: I finde the best of all Gods servants have much failed in this particular. Good *David* himselfe in the day of his prosperity kept not alwayes that humble spirit which hee had in his low estate, nor *Asa*, nor *Uzziah*, nor *Hezekiah*; and wee know the story of that famous Queen, 3.

whose motto in the time of her afflictions was *Tanquam ovis*, as a sheepe for the slaughter, yet afterwards it was thought needfull to intreate that it might not bee *tanquam indomita juvenca*, as an untamed Heifer. Men are infinitely prone to bee lifted up, when God enlarges them, but God infinitely deteſteth it, and will not put it up at the hands of any. Therefore I moſt humbly beſeech you, (Right Honorable, and Honorable and beloved) let *David* and *Solomon* his ſonne, and *UZZiah*, and *HeZekiah* bee warnings to you, and doe you labour to maintaine the ſame lowly ſpirit, that you had when you could keepe dayes of mourning for the ſinnes of the Kingdome, for your perſonall ſinnes and Parliament ſinnes, ſuch a ſpirit would infinitely pleaſe God. And laſtly,

4. In the time of deliverance, God expects of thoſe that are the Heads and Rulers of a people, that every deliverance ſhould by them bee improved to the utmoſt, for the end for which it is given; every Rod hath a voyce and calls for ſome dutie, and every mercy and deliverance hath a voyce and calls for a dutie, every victory your Armies have got, and every towne hath beene ſurrendred, every plot that hath been diſcovered hath ſome dutie written upon it, which God expects you ſhould learne: All theſe things without queſtion lie upon you, and God doth and will expect them at your hands, and what heart would not tremble to thinke how much lies upon you? my ſoule is deepely affected with your taske, more then humane ſtrength muſt carry you on, or you will bee *impares oneri*, never able to goe through your work. VVhat gratious man who underſtands this, would ever pray to God in his Chamber without remembring you, and your work? and for you your ſelves O what need is there that you ſhould call in the Payers and ſupplications of all Gods people to helpe you; and that every one of you,

lay

lay aside any busineſſe of your owne, all ſelf-intereſt, and count it to be but catching of Flyes, in compariſon of the worke you are called to; and that you lay aſide all carnall confidence of any power or wiſdome of your owne, or relying on any Arme of fleſh, that is never able to carry you thorough all your worke: But in ſtead hereof, to relie wholly upon the wiſdome, promiſe, and power of God, ſubmit your ſelves to him, and truſt to him alone, who onely is able to carry you thorough all. Thus of the ſecond part of my Text, the excellent commendation of this Tribe of *Iſſachar*, *They had underſtanding to know the times, and what Iſrael had to doe.* Spare mee libertie for a few words of the Third, and I have done; which is,

Third part of the Text, The intereſt theſe Leaders had in their brethren.

The intereſt that they had in their Brethrens hearts, *all their Brethren were at their command*, or at their *mouth*, *hung upon their mouth*: certainly it is not meant of any compulſion, but a power they had got in their brethrens hearts by their Wiſdome and faithfull carriage; they ſaw that they were wiſe and faithfull men, and that ſet them up high in their eſteem, and by this inward reſpect, the lifting up of their hands, was as good as the diſplaying of a Banner, to make all their brethren come out and ſpend their lives, and whatſoever they had in their Countreys ſervice; which affords us this Leſſon,

Doct. 3.

That *when the Heads and Leaders of a people are wiſe, to doe their duties, it gives them that intereſt in their Brethrens hearts, that they will bee at their diſpoſing.*

Of this I could give you abundance of evidence; *Moſes* reigned as King in *Jeſhurun*, his wiſdome and grace was the things which ſet him ſo high. *Joſhua* that had beene but *Moſes* ſervant, had the ſame power with them, becauſe they ſaw the wiſdome of God in him: This was it got *Job* that authority, that the *young* men feared him, and

Deut. 33. 4.

Iob 29.

the *aged, reverenced* him, and every eye which ſaw him, bleſſed him; becauſe hee put on righteouſneſſe, and wiſdome; and judgement was to him as a robe and diademe. *David* a man of a meane family, from a Shepheard, was
1 Sam. 18.16. *feared* by *Saul*, *loved by the people*, even while hee was
1 Kings 3.28. but a Captaine, becauſe they ſaw hee behaved *himſelfe wiſely*. *Solomon* a *childe*, and being but a childe, very ſubject to be contemned, ſwayed all Iſrael, they honoured him and feared him, *When they ſaw the wiſdome that God*
2 Sam. 23.3,4. *had given him to doe Juſtice and Judgement*; abundance of other inſtances there are of it, and *David* expreſſeth it notably in the 2 of *Samuel* 23. *He that rules over men muſt bee juſt, ruling in the feare of God*; if hee bee ſuch an one, hee ſhall bee *like the light of the morning, like a cleare bright morning without clouds, as the tender graſſe that growes by the ſweet ſhowers of raine*; ſuch a one ſhall bee
Eccleſ. 4.13. *amiable, deſirable, beautifull, comfortable*, hee is every thing you can wiſh, if hee bee a *good Man ruling in the feare of God*; and *Solomon* proves it notably by the contrary, in the 4 of *Eccleſiaſtes*, *Better is a poore and wiſe Childe, then an old and fooliſh King, who will no more be admoniſhed, &c.* A childe, a poore childe that hath wiſdome, will have more love and honour, then a King, though an old man, and a great Prince, if hee bee doting and fooliſh, and will not receive Counſell, nor learne wiſdome to diſcharge his duty; 'Tis wiſdome will winne hearts, and one dram of this wiſdome and grace will do more then a whole pound of greatneſſe: And the reaſon is plaine,

[Ra. Becauſe this Wiſdome that I have ſpoken of, is the Image of God, which cannot bee contemned, but will bee feared by them that are bad, and honoured and embraced by them that are good; and therefore it is ſaid of moſt of them I inſtanced in, that the people would ſay, *God was with them*, when they ſaw their wiſe behaviour. I winde up all with a brief Application. To

To you our Heads and Leaders, give me leave to instruct you, how you may keep *England* to be yours; how you may have your Brethren at your Command, not out of Rules of State-policy, but as a Minister of Christ, out of the Word of God, know the times and your duties, and walk as Men fearing God, taking the counsell of his Word as your onely guide; This will make the worst of men feare you, and the best honour and love you, your Brethrens hearts will hereby bee at your command, and your interest in their hearts will rule them better then Armies or Garrisons: Many great Politicians go another way to worke, they thinke the affections of people are not to bee valued, they say, *Populus humiliter servit, superbe dominatur*, that the People (like fire and water) are good Servants, but evill Masters; and therefore the best way is to subdue them and keep them under, but I am assured that you detest these Rules; you know well enough, that *the Peoples love is the best Exchequer*; and this Lesson teacheth you the surest way how to hold that firme, and close to you, even your wise walking and working in your great Trust; Herein lies the difference between VVisdome and Policy, VVisdome makes a man constantly keep the high road-way of Justice and Judgement, doing every thing upon Scripture grounds and rules: Policy directs men, when need is, to turne into odde by-paths, sometime taking in the helpe of the Foxes skin, sometime of the Lions paw; But (Beloved) you shall certainly finde the way of VVisdome to bee the safest and most successefull; Politicians may deceive others for a while, but themselves for ever: You your selves have had much experience of it, you know what it is to command in the hearts of your Brethren, had you had all the Port Townes in *England*, in the beginning of your Troubles, and Garisons whersoever you could have desired, it would never have done you the service which the

Use. Of Exhortation.

hearts

hearts of your brethren have done; you were in their hearts, and they have been at your command, and what gave you this intereſt? VVhy, they ſaw you were ſet upon Judgement and Juſtice, breaking their yoakes, removing their grievances, they ſaw your hearts were ſet to it; and while you goe on in the ſame wiſdome, pietie, ſingleneſſe and integrity; You will preſerve your intereſt in God and his people, and while you have Gods favour, and your brethrens hearts, all confederacies againſt you will bee broken, all conſpiraeies come to nought, *No weapon that is formed againſt you ſhall proſper, and every tongue that riſeth up againſt you ſhall bee condemned.* But ſhould they ever finde, (which God forbid) that you turne out of the right way of VViſdome and Piety, of Judgement and righteouſneſſe, that you grow injurious, that oppreſſion and injuſtice ſhould bee found among you, that you ſhould favour evill men in evill cauſes, grow to bee ſelf-ſeekers, or not cordially indeavouring to ſettle Peace and Religion, you would then certainly engage God againſt you, and loſe the hearts of your brethren, and you will be undone, and wee ſhall be undone with you. But I am perſwaded better things of you, and ſuch things as become a Parliament of *England*, yea, a Parliament thus bleſſed and magnified by God. But *conſider what I have ſaid, and the Lord give you underſtanding in all things.*

Eſay 54. 17.

FINIS.